

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGR-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05

L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15

STR-04 ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01

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R 131810Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9069

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

USDEL MTN GENEVA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT OF SPAIN 0932

SANTO DOMINGO FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, MTN, TD, GY

SUBJECT: TROPICAL PRODUCTS NEGOTIATIONS: REMOVAL OF
CARICOM RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES

REF: (A) 75 STATE 287116, (B) PORT OF SPAIN 0010,
(C) 74 PORT OF SPAIN A-54 (ALL NOTAL)

1. SOON AFTER ARRIVING AT THIS POST, I WAS STRUCK BY THE
FACT THAT RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES EMPLOYED BY CARIBBEAN
COMMUNITY (CARICOM) SEVERELY DAMAGE SALES OF U.S. AGRI-
CULTURAL PRODUCTS, ESPECIALLY RICE. THE U.S. IS TRINIDAD'S
MAJOR EXPORT CUSTOMER, YET CARICOM AGREEMENTS PREVENT SALE
OF U.S. RICE TO TRINIDAD AT A TIME WHEN AMERICAN RICE IS

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AVAILABLE FOR ABOUT ONE-THIRD LESS THAN TRINIDAD IS
PAYING FOR GUYANA RICE. AS FAR AS THE EMBASSY CAN LEARN,

THE TRINIDAD-GUYANA RICE ARRANGEMENT IS AN INFORMAL BILATERAL AGREEMENT, PERHAPS DATING BACK TO THE 1940'S, AND IS NOT--STRICTLY SPEAKING--A PART OF THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING PROTOCOLS OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY.

2. ALTHOUGH THE CARICOM AGRICULTURAL MARKETING PROTOCOLS WERE CITED AS AN IMPORTANT NON-TARIFF MEASURE IN REF (B), I DO NOT SUBSCRIBE TO THE CONCLUSION IN THAT CABLE THAT IT WOULD BE "IMPRACTICAL" TO BRING UP THIS TYPE OF RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICE IN CONTEXT OF MTN CONCESSIONS TO BE SOUGHT FROM TRINIDAD. THE U.S. HAS IN THE PAST SOLD SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF RICE IN TRINIDAD, BUT ONLY WHEN GUYANA WAS UNABLE TO FULFILL ITS SUPPLY OBLIGATIONS. I SEE NO REASON WHY TRINIDAD GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUBSIDIZE EXPENSIVE GUYANA RICE AND SHUT U.S. RICE SUPPLIERS OUT OF THIS MARKET.

3. I RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE, WHEN FORMULATING OBJECTIVES FOR USG AT MTN AS DESCRIBED REF (A), TAKE A HARD LOOK AT RESTRICTIVE MARKETING ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS THE BILATERAL RICE AGREEMENTS, WITH THE INTENT TO INSTRUCT OUR NEGOTIATORS AT GENEVA TO SEEK THEIR ELIMINATION AS THE PRICE OF ANY CONCESSIONS TO BE OFFERED BY THE USG TO TRINIDAD AND OTHER CARICOM NATIONS.
FAY

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